

[LV] Amendment to the Electronic Mass Media Law permits renewal of website access restrictions before their expiry

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On 11 June 2026, the Latvian Parliament (*Saeima*) adopted a single-provision amendment to the Electronic Mass Media Law (*Elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu likums*). The amendment was promulgated by President Edgars Rinkēvičs on 19 June 2026, published in the official gazette *Latvijas Vēstnesis* on the same date (OP 2026/117.11), and entered into force on 20 June 2026. It supplements Article 21.8, paragraph 2.1 of the National Electronic Mass Media Council law (*Nacionālā elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu padome* – NEPLP), allowing the media regulator to now adopt repeated decisions restricting access to websites before the term set in the previous decision has expired, indicating the period during which the new decision will be in force, where the website retransmits an audiovisual programme whose jurisdiction state undermines or threatens the territorial integrity, sovereignty or state independence of another state.

Article 21.8 has been part of the Electronic Mass Media Law since 1 January 2017 and governs the Council's follow-up powers where audiovisual programmes continue to be retransmitted without a valid retransmission authorisation. Under paragraph 2, where the Council cannot otherwise secure cessation, it may adopt a decision in the form of a general administrative act restricting access to websites available in Latvia on which audiovisual programmes are retransmitted without authorisation, for a period of up to 24 months; while such a decision is in force, the website's owner or representative may apply to the Council for a retransmission authorisation under the ordinary procedure. Paragraph 2.1, in its previous wording, addressed only the situation after such a restriction had run its course: where the term had expired, no application had been received, no authorisation issued and no extension agreed, the Council could verify that unauthorised retransmission continued and adopt a repeated restriction decision for up to a further 24 months, without re-running the preliminary procedure under Article 21.7. A separate paragraph allows the Council to restrict access to substantially identical mirror websites that replace previously restricted ones, and the Council maintains a public list of restricted websites on its own site.

The June 2026 amendment adds a second sentence to paragraph 2.1 and alters the timing of the renewal power for one category of cases. Under the previous wording, a repeated decision presupposed that the term of the earlier restriction

had ended, so continuity of blocking depended on the Council acting anew once the prior decision lapsed. The new sentence permits the Council to adopt the repeated access-restriction decision before the expiry of the term set in the previous decision, on one defined ground: the website must be retransmitting an audiovisual programme whose jurisdiction state undermines or threatens the territorial integrity, sovereignty or state independence of another state. A decision adopted on this ground must indicate the period during which it will be in force. For restrictions falling within this category, the amendment removes the interval that could otherwise arise between the expiry of one decision and the adoption of the next.

The amendment leaves the remainder of the access-restriction regime unchanged, including the 24-month term of an initial restriction under paragraph 2 and the renewal mechanism after expiry under the first sentence of paragraph 2.1. The renewal power introduced by the amendment has applied since 20 June 2026, and the Council's register of restricted websites remains published on its website.

Law of 11 June 2026 “Amendment to the Electronic Mass Media Law”, published in the official gazette Latvijas Vēstnesis, June 19, 2026, No. 117, OP 2026/117.11.

